



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

April 7, 2004

News Release

ICE-LED MULTI-AGENCY GANG CRACKDOWN LEADS TO 15 ARRESTS *Street terrorist initiative targets criminal street gangs in Mission District*

SAN FRANCISCO – A total of 15 foreign nationals with suspected ties to the notorious and violent Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) street gang were arrested here over the past three days in a coordinated operation involving agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the California Department of Justice Criminal Intelligence Bureau, and the San Francisco County Adult Probation Department.

The majority of the men arrested had criminal histories, including convictions for narcotics distribution and assault. Seven men admitted to being members of the 20th Street Mara Salvatrucha street gang, and possessed tattoos illustrating their gang affiliations. Six men admitted being members of the MS-affiliated “Sur 13 Surenos”, also known as the 19th Street Surenos, and possessed the identifying tattoos. Both gangs share an area of operations in and around Mission Street between 19th and 20th Streets. Two men are suspected members of a rival street gang called the Northern Ryders” also known as the Nortenos. The Northern Ryders are known to engage in criminal activity in other areas in and around the Mission District.

Those taken into custody were nationals of El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. Several of those arrested have been previously deported. One of the targets is expected to be federally prosecuted for re-entering the United States after deportation. In addition to the arrests, agents executed searches involving 24 suspected gang members who were out on probation, leading to the seizure of a handgun and ammunition.

“Street gangs are a breeding ground for crime,” said Charles DeMore, San Francisco special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations. “ICE is committed to using its broad immigration and customs authorities – both criminal and administrative – against gang members. We are working closely with our law enforcement partners to break up these deeply entrenched organizations that are a dangerous threat to the public safety of our communities.”

In San Francisco, ICE’s anti-gang enforcement effort is led by a team of investigators who locate foreign national gang members who are subject to deportation based on their criminal convictions.

In January 2005, ICE launched Operation Community Shield, a national law enforcement anti-gang initiative that brings all of ICE's law enforcement powers to bear in the fight against the MS-13. Last month, ICE announced the arrest of 103 MS-13 gang members on a range of criminal and/or administrative charges as part of that effort.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.